

III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS



Upon favorable recommendation of the faculty, the degree of Juris Doctor (J.D.) will be conferred upon those students who have successfully completed the academic program of the Law School. Successful completion of the academic program requires the following:

A. Credit for All First Year Courses

The first year curriculum is designed to accomplish two objectives. First, it introduces students to the various fundamental areas of the law: civil procedure, constitutional law, contracts, criminal law, property, torts, and legal research and writing. These courses provide the foundation on which most second and third year work is based. Second, the course work as a whole is designed to teach students legal analysis, synthesis, and argumentation.

Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
Intro to Legal Profession	1 hr.	Civil Procedure	4 hrs.
Contracts	4 hrs.	Constitutional Law	4 hrs.
Criminal Law	3 hrs.	Property	4hrs.
Torts	4 hrs.	Legal Research, Analysis & Writing II	<u>3hrs.</u>
Legal Research Analysis & Writing I	<u>3 hrs</u> 15 hrs.		15 hrs.

Students must complete all courses in the first year curriculum and earn a grade of D or better. A first year student who receives a grade of F in a first year course receives no credit and is required to repeat the course. The Associate Dean, however, may waive for good cause the requirement that the student retake the course.

B. Upper Level Credit Hour Requirements

During the second and third years, students must take no less than twelve (12) and no more than sixteen (16) hours each semester. During summer school students may take no more than six (6) hours. Students who wish to take additional hours must file a petition with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (see §VI.H). A form for this petition is available in the Office of the Registrar/Academic Services, room 128.

C. Upper Level Course Requirements

The goals for the second and third year curriculum, as defined by the Curriculum Committee, are as follows:

- to expand the student's substantive knowledge of basic subject matters;
- to expand the student's range of legal skills; to expand the student's perspective on law and the legal process;
- to permit the intensive pursuit of specialized subjects by the student;
- to permit faculty to teach courses related to areas of individual research, interest, and expertise; and
- to allow for experimentation in subject matter and pedagogical methods.

NOTE: The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will hold a meeting for students during the spring of each year, prior to registration for the following year, to guide students in selecting courses and to answer any questions they may have. Students are warned, however, that they have the responsibility of complying with all requirements for their degrees. The Office of the Registrar/Academic Services does not maintain a "running audit" of student's progress through Law School. The Registrar/Director of Academic Services will catch deficiencies only when checking the records of would-be graduating 3Ls.

While most upper level courses are elective, the following courses are required for graduation.

1. **Professional Responsibility.** Students must earn a grade of C or better in Professional Responsibility (2 credit hours) or Problems in Professional Responsibility (3 credit hours).
2. **A Professional Skills Course (not required for first year students entering in Fall 2016).** Text previously highlighted in handbook Students must earn a grade of Satisfactory, if the course is graded on a pass/fail basis, or a grade of C or better, if the course is graded on a letter basis, in at least one course that is designated as a professional skills course. A course taken to fulfill the professional skills requirement cannot fulfill the graduation writing requirement.

Students must obtain the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in order to satisfy the professional skills course requirement by taking a course outside the Law School.

Experiential Courses (starting with students entering the first year Fall 2016). Text previously highlighted in handbook Students must earn a grade of Satisfactory, if the course is graded on a pass/fail basis, or a grade of C or better, if the course is graded on a letter basis, **in at least six credit hours of courses designated as**

experiential courses. Courses taken to fulfill the experiential requirement cannot fulfill the graduation writing requirement.

Students must obtain the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in order to satisfy the experiential course requirement by taking courses outside the Law School.

3. **A Perspective Course.** The faculty believes that graduates of the School of Law should understand the law in its broader social context, have some sense of its history, and appreciate the philosophical underpinnings of its operation. To this end, all students must receive credit for one of the following perspective courses – this list varies each academic year:

American Legal History
Bioethics Seminar Coastal
Law/Coastal
Conservation Law
Children and the Courts
Civil Rights Seminar
Comparative Seminar on Judges
English Legal History
Federal Indian Law
International Environmental Law
International Human Rights Seminar
International Trade Law

Juvenile Justice
Law and Social Justice
Liberty Seminar
Poverty Law & Policy
Race, Class and Education
Religious Legal Systems: Jewish Law
Russian Law & Legal System
The Constitution & National Security
Transnational Dispute Resolutions
Transnational Law
Women and the Law

The perspective course requirement may be satisfied during either the second or third year.

Courses taken outside the Law School may not be used to satisfy the Law School perspective course requirement except where:

- a. there is good cause for not taking a perspective course at the Law School; and
- b. the course involved is the equivalent in educational value to a perspective course offered in the Law School.

Students must obtain the prior written approval of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in order to satisfy the perspective course requirement by taking a course outside the Law School.

A perspective course taken by a student prior to enrollment in the Juris Doctor program will not satisfy the perspective course requirement.

4. **Writing Requirement.** To satisfy the writing requirement, a student must complete a substantial legal research project that meets the criteria in subparagraph “a” or satisfies the requirements of a proposal approved by the Curriculum Committee under subparagraph “b”. A course taken to fulfill the writing requirement cannot fulfill the graduation professional skills course requirement or experiential course requirement.

- a. To satisfy the writing requirement a paper must:
- i. Be in the form of a law review article, brief, or memorandum of Law
 - ii. Be prepared under the supervision of a member of the faculty. The supervision requirement may be satisfied by:
 - (1) taking a course with not more than 20 students in which all students are required to write a paper complying with the writing requirement (identified in the registration materials as a "writing seminar"); or
 - (2) through independent research supervised by a faculty member. No faculty member shall supervise more than five such papers in any given semester.
 - iii. Be submitted in final written form of approximately 30 to 50 pages in length, after the submission of an outline and draft that have been critiqued by the professor.
 - iv. When graded, receive a grade of at least a C. If written under a pass/fail election, receive a grade of S. Note that under a pass/fail election a grade of C or higher is recorded as an S, and a grade of lower than a C is recorded as an F.

A brief submitted in a moot court competition can satisfy the writing requirement if: (1) an outline and a draft of the brief has been critiqued and approved by a supervising faculty member; and (2) the student contributes at least 30 pages to the brief. If the rules of the competition in which the brief was submitted preclude faculty involvement, the student must revise the brief to the satisfaction of the supervising faculty member after it has been submitted in the competition. This revision can include an outline and preliminary draft. If a student’s contribution to the brief is less than 30 pages, the student may satisfy the page requirement by submitting a supplemental memorandum.

A note submitted to a law journal by a member of that journal can satisfy the writing requirement if it meets the requirements of §III.B.5.a and the student does not receive degree credit for the note under §IV.E.1.

- b. The Curriculum Committee is authorized to approve on a case-by-case basis other Faculty proposals for satisfying the writing requirement, such as a series of shorter memoranda, problems, or drafting exercises. The Committee will approve only those proposals involving as much legal writing, in any appropriate form, as does the traditional 30-50 page paper.

Deadline for completion of the writing requirement. Unless the paper is written in a course that a student takes in his/her final semester, May graduates must submit their papers in final form by January 15, and December graduates must submit their papers in final form by September 1.

D. Passing Grade in 90 Semester Hours of Course Work; Effect of F

Students must successfully complete at least 90 semester hours of course credit, 64 credit hours of which must be in-class instructions. In addition to earning 90 credit hours students must complete Professional Responsibility or Problems in Professional Responsibility and the writing requirement with a grade of “C” or better.

Students failing to meet these requirements are required to repeat the courses, but the initial grade will remain on the student’s record. Law school courses taken by a student prior to enrollment in the Juris Doctor program will not be included in determining whether a student has met the 90 credit hour requirement. For good cause, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may waive the requirement to retake a required upper level course.

E. Cumulative Grade Point Average of Not Less than 2.00

Students must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 or better for all work taken for Law School credit.

F. Satisfaction of the Residency Requirement

Students must complete the equivalent of six (6) full semesters of law school residency, four (4) of which must have been completed while matriculating as a student at the University of South Carolina School of Law. A student obtains residency credit for a semester if the following requirements are met:

1. The student maintains registration for a minimum of twelve (12) law hours; and

2. The student receives a grade of Satisfactory or a letter grade of D or better in at least ten (10) credit-hours of course work.

If the student does not comply with either of these requirements, residency credit will not be granted for the semester in which the noncompliance occurs.

Merely complying with the minimum residency requirement of 12 credit-hours per semester for each semester in the second and third years will not enable a student to meet the 90 credit-hour requirement for graduation.

By attending summer school students may reduce their course loads during either the fall or spring semesters, but are still subject to the 12 law hours per semester rule.

In order to accelerate graduation by one semester (December graduation), a student must matriculate in two summer sessions and satisfactorily complete not less than 12 hours in the two sessions, with a minimum of 6 hours being required in each summer session. To satisfy this requirement, students taking Maymester courses must also take at least one course each summer that meets during the regular seven-week summer session.

G. Completion of Course Study for Degree Requirement.

Students must complete all degree requirements no later than 84 months (7 years) after first beginning as a law school student either at the University of South Carolina School or at a law school from which transfer credits has been accepted.